

## Message Text

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71-60

ACTION SCI-06

INFO OCT-01 ARA-16 ADP-00 L-03 NSF-04 DODE-00 CIAE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 RSR-01 PM-07 IO-13 NSC-10 PRS-01

/073 W

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R 121703Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2773

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 4945

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: TGEN, MARR, AR, US

SUBJECT: MARAMBIO AIR BASE COOPERATION

1. DURING RECENT VISIT OF NSF OFFICE OF POLAR PROGRAM OFFICIALS, EMBASSY WAS PROVIDED COPY OF DEPARTMENT'S MEMO OF JUNE 29 TO NSF EXPRESSING PREFERENCE FOR GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT ARRANGEMENT FOR PROPOSED MARAMBIO AIR BASE COOPERATION. EMBASSY APPRECIATES DEPARTMENT'S CONCERN AND IS IN FULL AGREEMENT THAT BOTH NEGOTIATION AND EXECUTION OF AGREEMENT COVERING THIS PROJECT MUST TAKE PLACE WITH KNOWLEDGE AND CONSENT OF GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES. WE DO NOT BELIEVE IT FOLLOWS FROM THIS BASIC PRINCIPLE, HOWEVER, THAT AGREEMENT MUST BE GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT IN FORM, OR THAT NEGOTIATIONS MUST TAKE PLACE AT GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT LEVEL.

2. HIGHEST LEVEL AUTHORITIES OF ARGENTINE AIR FORCE HAVE GIVEN CLEAR AND STRONG SIGNALS THAT AGREEMENT ON MARAMBIO WILL NOT BE POSSIBLE UNLESS ARRANGEMENTS ARE MADE DIRECTLY WITH AIR FORCE. WE ARE NOT FULLY AWARE OF AIR FORCE BASIS FOR THIS VIEWPOINT, NOR IS IT CLEAR WHETHER AIR FORCE IS MAKING CLEAR DISTINCTION BETWEEN WHO NEGOTIATES AGREEMENT, AND WHO SIGNS AGREEMENT. IN ANY EVENT, WE BELIEVE LOGICAL COURSE OF ACTION AT THIS JUNCTURE IS TO EXPLORE INFORMALLY WITH ARGENTINE AIR FORCE THE BASIS FOR THEIR POSITION SO THAT WE CAN FACTOR THIS THINKING INTO FINAL US DECISION ON TYPE OF AGREEMENT TO SEEK, AND PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED IN ITS NEGOTIATION. WE SEE NO DANGER IN SUCH EXPLORATORY DISCUSSIONS

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WITH AIR FORCE, PARTICULARLY SINCE WE WOULD USE OCCASION TO MAKE IT

CLEAR THAT FURTHER PROGRESS WOULD DEPEND ON APPROPRIATE APPROVAL FROM GOA CIVIL AUTHORITIES.

3. WHILE EMBASSY RECOGNIZES THAT ARGENTINE MILITARY SERVICES DO NOT HAVE AUTONOMY, THEY HAD BEFORE, WE QUESTION WHETHER AGENCY-TO-AGENCY AGREEMENT MADE UNDER GOA COGNIZANCE AND PURSUANT TO GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT SCIENCE AGREEMENT WOULD BE LESS SECURE THAN NEW GOVERNMENT

LEVEL AGREEMENT. MOREOVER, FROM SUBSTANTIVE POINT OF VIEW, WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT ANTARCTIC POLICY PROBLEMS RE AGREEMENT TO COOPERATE AT MARAMBIO ARE MORE EASILY AVOIDED IN TECHNICAL AGREEMENT AT AGENCY LEVEL, TO THE ADVANTAGE OF BOTH PARTIES.

4. AS DEPT AND NSF AWARE, EMBASSY FEELS STRONGLY THAT US ACCESS TO MARAMBIO AIR BASE AFFORDED BY COOPERATIVE PROGRAM IS DECIDELY IN LONG-TERM US INTERESTS IN ANTARCTIC. WE RECOGNIZE THAT US INTERESTS MUST BE SAFEGUARDED BY APPROPRIATE AGREEMENT, BUT BELIEVE THAT WE SHOULD NOT FOREGO ADVANTAGE THIS COOPERATION BY PRECONDITIONS ON FORM OF AGREEMENT WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING ARGENTINE WISHES IN MATTER AND BASIS THEREFORE.

5. FOR REASONS CITED ABOVE, EMBASSY RECOMMENDS IT BE AUTHORIZED TO EXPLORE INFORMALLY WITH ARGENTINE AIR FORCE ALTERNATIVES PROCEDURES FOR NEGOTIATION AND CONCLUSION OF AGREEMENT ON MARAMBIO, MAKING IT CLEAR IN SUCH CONVERSATIONS THAT, IN ANY EVENT, AGREEMENT MUST BE NEGOTIATED AND CONCLUDED WITH KNOWLEDGE AND CONSENT OF GOA.  
KREBS

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